

Peopling: Life Giving
Nick Farr - August 27, 2017

Series Big Idea: The Bible is clear that there are different kinds of people and we need to respond to each kind of person in a different way. There is no “one size fits all” way to engage with people. There are some people who outright reject the truth and are intent on hurting us. There are some people who refuse to deal with truth and reality. Then there are the wise who listen to the truth and allow God’s wisdom to transform how they live. In this series we’ll look at each kind of person and figure out how to do “peopling” well with different people types. The Bible and especially the book of Proverbs gives us wisdom on how to learn to people well.

Message Big Idea: The way of the fool or evil person will lead to a trainwreck. The path of a wise person leads to life and God’s blessing. But the path of wisdom is hard and is best traveled with other wise people. We need wise people to become wise. We need to help wise people become wiser. Wise people need each other. That’s why we have to do life together. We need to be connected to people who are life giving and to whom we can give life.

Main Idea: Intentionally walk with the wise and become wise.

Main Text: Hebrews 10:19-25

Supporting texts: Proverbs 13:20

Reflection/Discussion Questions:

1. Talk about your friend circle right now. Maybe you have different friend circles for different occasions. How did you become friends with these individuals? Was it intentional or did they just happen naturally?
2. Read Proverbs 13:20 together as a group. Take those same friends and run them through the filter of “are these friends wise or unwise?” Talk about the results with your group.
3. Hebrews 10:19-25 talks about spurring one another on to a better relationship with Jesus. Are all of your friends (who have influence in your life) inciting, provoking, and encouraging you to have a deepen relationship with God? What does this look like in practice?
4. Who are the people in your life that have influence that shouldn’t? Who are the people in your life that don’t have tremendous influence that should? How do you need to adjust the balance so that you can grow spiritually?
5. If you have a mentor, talk with the group about what that relationship looks like. If you don’t have a mentor commit to finding one in the next 3 weeks. Look for someone that is following Jesus the way you want to follow Jesus. Typically, a mentor is older than you are.

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Message:

Freshman Year. Band Trip. Friend's Dying their Hair. Parents said no. Got to Disney World. Friends were putting in Sun-in. They were taunting me. I threw caution to the wind. Decided nobody told me what to do. Went back to riding rides. Ended up with Orange hair.

We can all listen to my story and say, "That's cute. We all did crazy things when we were younger." However, just as Glen said throughout this series, just because you've gotten older doesn't mean you're wiser.

I wanted to fit into my crowd, to become one of them. I thought the simple act of dying my hair would do that. The people we surround ourselves with have great influence in our lives. Proverbs 13:20 reads:

"Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm."

I clearly wasn't walking with other wise people when I chose to go against my parents and dye my hair orange. I didn't suffer physical harm but my ego sure took a beating.

So how do we know if we're in a companion of fools or if we're walking with the wise? How do we get out of a foolish friend group and shift towards walking with wiser people?

If today is your first day in this series, we're finishing up a 4 weeks of teaching called "Peopling." Pastor Glen has been teaching us how to become wiser and recognize when people around us are foolish and evil. If you've missed the first three messages, I encourage go back and watch the others on our website at pantano.church. Today, we're wrapping all of this up and will spend some time talking about how we can learn to find wise people that we can walk with to become wiser.

Too often we surround ourselves with just who ever happens to comes around. Over the years, I've had friends that I'm just like "How did this happen? How did we even get connected?" Suddenly you look at your Facebook feed and you're like, "who the heck are you?"

Maybe we feel like our friends are our "friends" because have no other choice. We're kind of stuck with them. Someone might have told you that Christians are supposed to be friends with everyone around us. That just not true. Here's the distinction: **We're called to LOVE everyone around us (even if they don't agree with us), but that doesn't mean we've got to give away the power to influence us to everyone that comes along.**

Wisdom grows when we intentionally surround ourselves with those that are wise.

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Wisdom doesn't happen overnight. It takes time. You've got to put in the effort and choose wise people to be around which leads me to my bottom line:

Intentionally walk with the wise and become wise.

Maybe your friends are your friends because it just happened. Maybe you're in a season of transition with friends. Maybe you don't have a close circle of people that you do life with outside of family. Whatever our relationships look like today, I want us to ask ourselves where do we go from here? How do we begin to take an intentional look at who we're walking with? We've got to get in the habit of asking ourselves, "Are they wise? Will they help us become wiser?" If the answer is no then we need to decrease the influence they have in our lives.

Going back to my friends at Disney: I knew they weren't the wisest group of people, but they were "cool" and I felt like an outcast. So I ended up trading wisdom for being cool. Looking back now, it's so obvious that they were actually encouraging me to go against my parents and do something pretty silly. Ultimately, though, it was my decision to open the bottle and pour it over my head. I have to take responsibility for who I allow to have in my life, what I chose to influence me, and what I choose to do.

Ask yourself: Who have I given power to influence my life right now? Let that sink in for a moment. I bet the Holy Spirit is bringing someone to your mind right now. Don't you love how God does that? He's right here, right now, using his wise words to move us closer to him.

These "friends" you might be thinking about right now: Do they encourage you to gossip, follow your heart, quit your job without another lined up, and so on. Are they constantly complaining about the government, health care, the economy, politicians on both sides, and the list goes on and on.

Whatever it is, we have to be so careful about who and what we allow to influence us. The old adage says, "hang around negative people and you'll become negative" This is so true and the only way we can combat this is to be intentional about who we choose to be around.

We've got to: Intentionally walk with the wise and become wise.

I want to look at a passage of scripture that speaks to the process of choosing who and what we allow in our lives. Turn with me to Hebrews 10 because this is going to help us be so much more intentional with our selection process.

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Let's look at Hebrews 10:24-25 on page 822.

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Most of us read this and we're like, "YES. I can do that. I'll come to church. I'll read my Bible. I'll listen to Christian music. I'm good to go." I can spur one another one to do that. I won't give up the habit of meeting together. But this passage goes deeper than that.

They're some interesting word choices in the original language here.

The first is the word "spur." We're supposed to spur one another on....

Spur in the original Greek is "paroxysmos". It literally means to incite, irritate, or provoke. These are some serious words and they usually have a negative meaning. People incite violence. They irritate the junk out of you. They provoke you to retaliate. But that's not what this Greek word means. The Bible is using this word, "Spur" in a positive sense to cause change or transformation. But, it's doing so in an intimate way. We're not supposed to drop truth bombs on everyone. That does nobody any good. It all comes in the context of relationship.

I remember a time when one of my friends sat me down and told me I needed to give my wife, Laura, a break. I grew up communicating fast. Words have tremendous value. Laura grew up taking more time to communicate things. She would begin to say something and I'd be ready to respond effectively shutting her down. It had become such a real problem because Laura was afraid to share how she felt because I'd poke a bunch of holes in it. Then she'd get flustered and I'd move in to win the argument. Friend called me out. Told me I needed to stop. It incited me, irritated me, and provoked me to change. This is what spurring looks like. My friend challenged me out of love, out of our relationships to grow.

This was successful because we had a personal relationship. If I hadn't known him really well or at all, I would have just ignored him or smarted off. But the relationship was key for me to be spurred on and for us to obey Hebrews 10.

Spurring one another on can't happen in isolated. It doesn't work well over facebook comments and posts either. Sometimes we feel really good about dropping truth and we feel like we're obeying scripture to call someone out. But it does no real good unless we're in relationship with them. The relationship opens the doors to actual listening and understanding.

We have to get to a place where I can speak into your life and you can speak into my life. This is where the real growth happens. Part of our mission statement is "Loving People to Jesus." Maybe you only think about that as being externally focused and

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outreach oriented, but this applies to those of us in this room or watching online right now. We need to love each other to Jesus too. When we're intentional about this, that's when we begin to see change.

I want to ask you this question: Can we truly spur one another on by just coming to church, listening to the message, reading the Bible at home, and tuning into Christian music? No, we can't. The context here is that we're doing this together. We're provoking others around us to move their relationship forward with Jesus. Or as Proverbs talks about, we're walking with the wise to become wiser.

In Hebrews 10, We're supposed to engage with those around us and help provoke them on to a better relationship with Jesus. This can't realistically happen well until we've intentionally decided to walk with the wise and specifically choose to deepen our relationship with Jesus. Intentional community invites others to provide real commentary on our lives. I've had friends say, "Nick, you seem pretty negative lately. What's wrong?" or "You've been pretty short with your wife and kids." "Are you showing them grace?"

Growth happens when we intentionally choose to walk with the wise.

So the best way for us to spur, incite, or provoke others to grow closer to Jesus is to do so in relationship.

Now let's go back to the second half of this passage. I want to focus on not giving up meeting together.

Verses 24-25

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, **not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching."**

The Bible says it: Don't give up meeting together. What does this meeting together look like? I like to break it down into two different categories.

On one hand, we've got "church attender" people. Church attenders just show up and leave. Sure they're nice and will chit chat, but it never really goes beyond that.

Church attenders may never miss a service, but the totality of their involvement is primarily "sit, stand, sing, listen, sit, stand" and so forth. The Bible never tell us to be "church attenders" -- No! The Bible tells us to SPUR one another on, encourage one another, regularly meet together, and so on. But to those of us sitting here or watching online and thinking "that's me," I want to encourage you. God designed life to be such much better and so much fuller in community. God wants you to know the joy of being connected to those around you. It's like watching TV in black and white. You still see the show and may still love it, but it becomes ALIVE when you see all of the different colors. That's the church. Church attenders are watching in black and white, but God has

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designed us to live in COLOR and it's many layers, personalities, ethnicities, and backgrounds. God wants us to be connected to each other.

Life connected is the term I'd like to use to describe this for my second category.

Life connected people actually do life with people around them. They keep tabs on what's going on in the lives of those around them. They know how people are doing, what's going on in their work life, how their family is, and so on. They are connected and experience church in a much more dynamic way. I'd like to show you how this happens in real life.

I want to introduce you to someone that was just church attender until a couple months ago. His name is Chris Valenzuela. Chris is in my life group. I love Chris. I know what's going on in his life. I adore his family. Chris and his family used to sit in the church lobby every week and watch our service on the televisions. But Chris knew it could be better so he intentionally decided to become LIFE CONNECTED.

1. **Describe what your normal routine was for church before our group started meeting.**
2. **How did this change? What would you say to the person sitting here realizing that they are missing out? How do they make the change?**

When we look at Hebrews 10, we need to resist the temptation to only interpret "do not give up meeting together" as Bible talk for never miss a church service. What this passage is really talking about is don't forget to connect with other people in an intentionally deeper way. This is exactly what Chris talked about just a couple moments ago. He realized that by only coming here meant he was missing out on something. He intentionally acted and got life connected with others.

Your story doesn't have to stay the same today either. God has given you everything you need to get life involved. But the next step is yours.

Intentionally walk with the wise and become wise.

Maybe today you need to get up and go outside and connect with a new life group. We've even got groups already forming for our next series as we go through the book of James. The James groups are just for the series and will show you what a group can do for your life.

Maybe your next step is to find someone that can specifically spur you on. Maybe this is a wise friend. Maybe it's a mentor. I've done this over the years by intentionally seeking out friends and a mentor. I've had various mentors for the past 12 years. It's been the best thing to ever happen to me. These mentors are much wiser than I am and

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they see life through an entirely different lense. They've challenged me to be a better man, a better husband, a better father, and transformed how I do ministry. They are such life giving people.

Without friends that spur me on and mentors who've helped me see the world differently, I don't think I'd be standing here right now. My marriage wouldn't be as healthy as it is because I would have missed all their encourage. I would have given up on preaching, thrown in the towel of ministry, but because of others, because of their spurring on, I was able to move beyond.

You might have heard the story of my family living in my parent's basement before we came to Pantano. That was the hardest year of my life. Unemployed. Food stamps. Being kept afloat because of parents and in-laws. Pride shattered. But a friend, one of those I had intentionally developed a relationship knew he needed to incite me to see things differently. It was because of that friend and his spurring, that my anger with God melted away and I moved forward. If you don't have wise friends like that, stop watching black and white tv. Get life connected and know the goodness of God's community.

It all comes down to this: We need wise people to live well. We need wise people to help us live wisely. Wise people seek wise people. Wise people listen to wise people.

You can't learn to people wisely until you share life with people!

Finished early. Go outside and explore a group. Ask the information table how to choose a mentor. Take this time by yourself. If you go get your kids now, you'll interrupt their time with God.